

# 2011 Guidelines for COM Approval Application

## How To Apply for Chief of Mission (COM) Approval for the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Program.

### Embassy of the United States of America Baghdad, Iraq

If you wish to apply for Chief of Mission (COM) Approval for the SIV program, please send an email containing the eight items listed under REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION below to [IraqSIVapplication@state.gov](mailto:IraqSIVapplication@state.gov). All the information must be contained in **one email**. The subject line of the email must contain your name as the principal applicant as it is written in the passport or translated nationality certificate and the date of birth using the following format DAY MONTH YEAR.

Do not include family member's information in the subject line. If a COM Approval letter is issued, instructions will be provided on how to add a spouse and unmarried children under the age of twenty-one to your case. It is recommended that you continue to use the same email address for all correspondence throughout the process.

*Please do not submit anything more than what is listed below unless we request you to do so. Specifically, do not submit photographs, certificates of appreciation, training certificates, resumes or academic transcripts. These documents have no bearing on your COM Approval application and will not be considered.*

#### **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION:**

**1. Form DS-157:** The form is available at [http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/info/info\\_4172.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/info/info_4172.html). It is important that you follow the instructions found at the following [link](#) when completing the DS-157. This form must be completed in full and include start and finish dates for all employment, academic and military history.

**2. Verification of 12 months employment with the U.S. Government in Iraq:** A letter from your employer's Human Resources (HR) Department confirming that you were employed by, or on behalf of, the United States Government in Iraq on or after March 20, 2003.

This letter should be emailed directly from your employer to [IraqSIVApplication@state.gov](mailto:IraqSIVApplication@state.gov) with your case number in the subject line. You will be assigned a case number as soon as you submit an application to [IraqSIVApplication@state.gov](mailto:IraqSIVApplication@state.gov), even if you do not possess all of the required documentation. If your employer is no longer active, you may submit the HR letter directly to [IraqSIVApplication@state.gov](mailto:IraqSIVApplication@state.gov) with your case number in the subject line.

The letter must contain:

- Name;
- Date of birth;
- Job title;
- Job location (base or city and province);
- Start date;
- End date; and
- Reason for separation if no longer employed.
- Contract numbers relevant to your employment

**3. Letter of Recommendation from your direct, American citizen supervisor:**

The letter must be from a direct American citizen supervisor who knew you personally. It should cover the same period of employment covered by the HR employment verification letter. It must contain:

- Name of applicant;
- Date of birth
- Badge number;
- Job title;
- Job location;
- Start date of supervision;
- End date of supervision;
- Supervisor's name, title and contact information, preferably an official email address
- Justification for recommending the applicant for COM approval, i.e. that the applicant provided faithful and valuable service to the United States Government; and
- The supervisor's opinion on whether the applicant poses a threat to the national security or safety of the United States.

If the above recommendation is not possible to obtain from a U.S. citizen supervisor, please carefully review [http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/info/info\\_4172.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/info/info_4172.html) for guidance.

**4. Evidence of Iraqi nationality:** A copy of your Iraqi passport. If no passport is available, submit a copy of your nationality certificate (shahadat jensiyah).

**5. Biographic data** for you the principal applicant:

- First name:
- Father's name:
- Grandfather's name:
- Family name (Tribe):
- All other names/alias:
- Mother's name
- Nationality:
- Passport number:
- Date of birth:
- Place of birth:
- Gender:
- Marital status:
- Email address:
- Phone number:
- Work location (base or city and province):
- Residence location (base or city and province):

**6. Employee badges:** If available, a scanned copy of your most recent identification badge(s).

**7. Statement of threats received as a consequence of U.S. Government employment:** A brief statement which **must be written, signed and dated by you** describing the threat you faced as a result of your employment on behalf of the U.S. Government in Iraq. **Statements provided by other parties are not acceptable.**

**8. Previous or current SIV or USRAP Applications:** The case or file number and name of the principal applicant or any immediate family members who has previously applied for the SIV or USRAP program.

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While this list specifies the documents required of all applicants, we may request additional information and documentation should questions arise during processing. Once an application has been submitted to [IraqSIVApplication@state.gov](mailto:IraqSIVApplication@state.gov), the applicant can expect a 6-8 week wait for a response. If you have further questions about the SIV program, please first review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) at [http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/info/info\\_4172.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/info/info_4172.html). If your question is not answered, you may write to the Iraq SIV program at [IraqSIVApplication@state.gov](mailto:IraqSIVApplication@state.gov)

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING FORM DS-157 FOR THE SIV PROGRAM**

**Do not leave any boxes blank.** All questions must contain an appropriate response or your application will be delayed. Please read and follow the below instructions carefully when completing the DS-157. If the form does not provide sufficient space for your response, you may use additional sheets of paper.

1. Enter your family or surname as it appears in your passport.
2. Enter your first name as it appears in your passport.
3. Enter your full name in native alphabet (Arabic) as it appears in your passport.
4. Enter your clan or tribal name. If you do not have a clan or tribal name, write 'none.'
5. Enter your spouse's full name. If you are unmarried, write 'N/A.'
6. Enter your father's full name as it appears in his passport.
7. Enter your mother's full name as it appears in her passport.
8. Enter the name, address and phone number of your U.S. contact person or organization in the following format: Sam Smith, 2100 Peach Street, Houston, TX 77003, phone (713) 555 1212. If you do not have a U.S. contact person or organization, write 'none.'
9. List all the countries you have visited during the past ten years and the year of the visit, e.g. China 2004, Italy 2007. If you have never traveled outside of Iraq, write 'none.'
10. List all the countries which have issued you a passport, including your current one. If you have never been issued a passport and do not hold a current passport, write 'none.'
11. Check the appropriate box.
12. List your two *previous* employers, not your current one. If you have had only one employer or no employer before your current job, you should explain that in the box. List your previous employers regardless of whether they have a connection to the United States. Please explain your job if you were self-employed.
13. List all professional, charitable and social organizations in which you are or were a member. The Ba'ath Party is considered a professional organization. If you were a member of the Ba'ath Party, provide details of your membership and the highest level of membership you achieved. Do not write the names of employers. If you have never been a member of an organization, write 'none.'
14. If your answer is yes, provide details of your specialized skill.
15. This refers to Iraqi military service. If you answered yes, provide your start and end dates.
16. This refers to all armed conflicts in which you have been involved, regardless of when it occurred. If your answer is yes, provide details.
17. List the names and addresses of **all** the educational institutions you attended *after* elementary school. Include the month and year you started and finished. If you did not attend any educational institution after elementary school, you should state that in this box.
18. Check the appropriate box.

### **ADDITIONAL TIPS TO PREVENT A DELAY IN PROCESSING YOUR APPLICATION:**

- Ensure the scanned copies of documents you provide are clear. Print your documents in black print on white paper before scanning.
- Use the **same spelling of your name** on all documents and email correspondence. The spelling should match how your name is written in your passport. You should list aliases after your correct name.